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DECEMBER MEETING, 1887.

THIS meeting was held on the 8th instant, Dr. GEORGE E. ELLIS presiding, and there was a large attendance.

The Recording Secretary read his monthly report, and the Librarian presented a list of donations to the Library for the last month.

The Corresponding Secretary mentioned that Mr. Solomon Lincoln had accepted his election to Resident Membership, and that Mr. William C. Rives had accepted his election to Corresponding Membership.

The President announced the recent death of J. Carson Brevoort, LL.D., of New York, who was a Corresponding Member of the Society ; and Dr. EVERETT and Mr. HORACE SCUDDER paid tributes to his memory.

The Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP made the following remarks :—

If I had found myself able, Mr. President, to attend our last monthly meeting, I should have said a few words about the Honorary Member of this Society whose place on our roll we are proposing to fill to-day. It is not too late, perhaps. It is never too late to do an act of justice.

I refer to the Hon. Elihu B. Washburne, of Illinois, whose death has been recently announced, and whose public career is well entitled to some notice on our records. I was not in the way of witnessing personally his long and faithful service in the House of Representatives of the United States, from 1852 to 1869, as I had ceased to be a member of Congress a year or two before he entered it. But I knew him well in later years, while he was our Minister in Paris. He was there during the war between France and Germany and during the terrible period of the Commune, and he held fast to his post in Paris when all the other ministers and ambassadors had fled. Nothing could have been braver or more devoted than his services at that time. Faithful to his own country, he

won the regard and respect of Germany, without forfeiting the esteem and confidence of the French people. He endeared himself especially to M. Thiers, at whose dinner-table I met him, and who was unreserved in his expressions of friendship and admiration for him.

I may recall particularly the interest Mr. Washburne took in regard to the monument of Count Rumford, which had been shattered by a shell during the siege of Paris, and which was restored at the joint expense of our American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and of Harvard University, of both of which Rumford was one of the greatest benefactors. I remember driving with Mr. Washburne to Rumford's tomb, and arranging with him for that restoration, which he kindly took in charge and completed.

Mr. Washburne, among other noteworthy things, wrote a most interesting Memoir of our late Honorary Member, Edward Coles, the Governor of Illinois in 1823, who signalized himself in the cause of anti-slavery long before it had become a subject of concern to others, and who was hardly second to any one in his efforts for saving our Western territory from the introduction of slavery, and, indeed, for emancipation generally. Since then, and very recently, he published his "Recollections of a Minister in France," in two volumes, which abound in striking accounts of what he did and saw, and part of which he was, during his mission.

Mr. Washburne was a man of great energy and ability. Born in Maine in 1816, while it was still a district of our own Commonwealth, he might be claimed as a Massachusetts man; but he has left a record worthy of being commemorated not only in Massachusetts and Maine and Illinois, but throughout our whole country.

Mr. WINTHROP continued: —

The opinion of this Society has been requested, by our associate Senator Hoar, in regard to the four Frenchmen to be grouped in bronze around the statue of Lafayette on the monument ordered by Congress.

Senator Hoar has kindly sent to me, as chairman of the Committee to which the subject was referred at the last meeting, a copy of the proposed contract between certain eminent

French artists and the Commissioners appointed by Congress for procuring the monument.

The terms of that contract clearly imply, as I think, not only that the four figures are to be those of Frenchmen, compatriots of Lafayette, but of compatriots in the War of the American Revolution. This is the phraseology of the contract: "A monument with a statue of General Lafayette and subordinate figures and suitable emblematic devices thereon, to the memory of General Lafayette and his compatriots in the War of the American Revolution."

The contract proceeds to say that the statue of General Lafayette shall be of bronze, and that he shall be depicted in the uniform of a Major-General in the Continental Army of the Revolution. And it then goes on to provide that "the said four of his compatriots shall be depicted in the uniforms of their respective grades during the period of the American Revolution."

All this plainly contemplates a military monument, and seems to require that the four subordinate figures shall be the figures of four Frenchmen who served in the army or navy of France in this country, in connection with General Lafayette.

I am told that some of our associates, including, perhaps, Senator Hoar himself, were of opinion that our selection was not to be limited to those who aided our country in the military or naval service; and that suggestions were made, at our last meeting, in regard to Beaumarchais, Vergennes, and others. But the terms of the contract, if they should not be modified, seem to me to relieve us most happily from any consideration of civilians. I say most happily, for I think there would be great embarrassment and perplexity in attempting a discrimination among those who aided us otherwise than by personal service in our war. The truth is that we owed more to the King, to the unfortunate Louis XVI., than to any one of his ministers or subjects, Lafayette alone excepted. But no one would dream of placing a statue of the King among the subordinate figures of such a monument. It would be anything but a compliment to Royalty.

There are other considerations, however, touching Vergennes and Necker and Maurepas, and Beaumarchais especially, which we may gladly be excused from discussing, and which would lead me, certainly, to confine the selection to offi-

cers of the army or navy, even were the terms of the contract to be changed.

And, indeed, a majority of the Committee (Mr. Winsor and myself) agree entirely in confining our choice to officers of the French army or navy who came over personally to help us.

Foremost among these were the Marquis (or, as he was then called, the Count) de Rochambeau, commanding the French army, and the Count de Grasse, commanding the navy. There can be no hesitation, we think,—certainly there is none on the part of any of the Committee,—in placing these two gallant officers at the head of the four compatriots of Lafayette, to be grouped around his statue.

Only two places thus remain to be the subject of question. For the filling of these two places many names will suggest themselves to many minds,—for there was a marvellous and multitudinous array of the bravery and chivalry of France in our Revolutionary War. In the naval service there was the unfortunate Admiral de Ternay, who died early, and was buried at Newport, and whose remains have been the subject of renewed honor within a few years past. There was, also, the hardly less unfortunate and even more distinguished Admiral d'Estaing, sent over to us early, under the influence of poor Marie Antoinette. But neither of these officers had any part in the final success of our cause. Then there was the Count de Barras, the senior Admiral of the French fleet in our waters, who most disinterestedly and nobly surrendered the command to the Count de Grasse, and whose only other distinction was that of being one of the signers of the capitulation at Yorktown. The truth is that De Grasse was the great hero of the French navy in our service; and no one can be placed in competition, or, I had almost said, in companionship, with him. In view of the misfortunes and injustices which befell him after he left our coast in triumph, the figure of De Grasse may well stand alone on this monument, as the pre-eminent representative of the navy of France.

Meantime, there is a much larger number of French army officers who distinguished themselves conspicuously in our Revolutionary struggle, and particularly in that great culminating victory at Yorktown, which Lafayette, next to Washington, was most instrumental in accomplishing, and which was the crowning triumph of American independence.

Of these officers, the Baron de Viosménil, the second to Rochambeau in command of the French troops, and under whose immediate direction one of the ever memorable redoubts at Yorktown was so gallantly stormed and captured, has been selected by all your Committee, to be named next after Rochambeau and De Grasse.

For the fourth place, which only remains to be filled, Mr. Winsor has agreed with me in naming the Marquis de Saint-Simon, who brought over from the West Indies at the last moment more than three thousand fresh French troops, making assurance of our success doubly sure, and whose coming gave such confidence and such delight to Washington that he is described by the Count de Deux-Ponts, in the journal so happily found and published by our Librarian, Dr. Green, as playing the boy and swinging his chapeau in ecstasy.

The Marquis de Saint-Simon commanded these vital reinforcements at Yorktown, and, after being severely wounded during the siege, insisted on being borne forward on a litter into the trenches. Washington, in a letter to the President of Congress, on the 12th of October, 1781, just a week before the surrender of Cornwallis, uses this emphatic language : —

“I cannot but acknowledge the infinite obligations I am under to Count de Rochambeau, the Marquis de Saint-Simon, commanding the troops from the West Indies, the other general officers, and indeed the officers of every denomination in the French army, for the assistance they afford me.”

Washington thus names but two, of whom the Marquis de Saint-Simon was one.

Should the views of this Report be accepted as the opinion of our Society, the group around the statue of Lafayette would be recommended to consist of the Marquis de Rochambeau, the Count de Grasse, the Baron de Viosménil, and the Marquis de Saint-Simon.

The Committee consisted of Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Winsor, and Dr. Everett; and after the reading of the Report, Dr. EVERETT stated that he had been prevented from attending the meeting of the Committee, but that he now desired to signify his entire concurrence with the Report. The Report was

thus made unanimous, and was thereupon unanimously adopted by the Society; and copies of it were at once sent to the Hon. George F. Hoar in Washington.

Professor HAYNES then said:—

The Committee appointed to consider the question of the alleged early discovery of America by the Norsemen, beg leave to offer the following Report:—

Our knowledge of the early annals of Iceland largely rests on the remarkable work of Snorro Sturleson (b. 1178; d. 1241). From old stories and songs handed down by tradition he compiled “Chronicles of the Kings of Norway,” usually styled the “Heimskringla,” from the first prominent word contained in it. A written copy of this was made on or about the year 1230 by Snorro’s nephew, from which all the existing manuscripts are derived.¹ The first printed edition of it appeared in 1594, and was a translation of it into Latin. The original Icelandic text was not printed until 1697, when it was given to the world by Peringskiöld. In 1705 Thormod Torfason (Torfæus), an eminent Danish antiquary, published a little volume, now become rare, entitled “*Historia Vinlandiæ Antiquæ*.” In this he states that Peringskiöld had not made use of the most authentic manuscripts of Snorro for his edition, but had incorporated, together with other minor additions, eight entire chapters, which are not to be found in any existing manuscript of Snorro’s work.² These eight chapters, from 105 to 112 inclusive, were undoubtedly taken by Peringskiöld, or by some previous transcriber from whom he copied them, from the first eight chapters of the Saga of King Olaf Tryggvesson. Of this Saga the oldest manuscript (and this is probably the oldest existing Icelandic manuscript) is the Codex Flatoyensis, so called from the name of an island where it had been long preserved. This manuscript shows by internal evidence that it was written between 1387 and 1395. It is not an original work by one author, but a collection of older sagas.³ The details respecting Leif Ericson’s voyage to Vinland are to be found only in these eight

¹ Heimskringla, ed. Schönning-Hafn. 1777, Introd., p. xix.

² *Historia Vinlandiæ Antiquæ* per Thormodum Torfæum, Præfatio ad lectorem, p. 4.

³ The Heimskringla, translated by Samuel Laing, vol. i. pp. 156–158.

added chapters. All that Snorro says about this voyage is contained in chapter 105, and reads as follows: "The same spring King Olaf sent Leif Ericson to Greenland to proclaim Christianity there, and Leif went there that summer. . . . He also found Vinland, the good." There is nothing in the context to determine the precise date of "*the same spring*;" but from various circumstances, detailed in Snorro and in other sagas, it is shown to have been about the year 1000.¹

No saga manuscript now existing, however old the saga itself may be, bears an earlier date than the latter part of the fourteenth century. As it was not until two hundred and thirty years after the event that Snorro committed to writing the statement that Leif discovered Vinland, and as the date of the manuscript which contains the details respecting the discovery is at least one hundred and seventy years later, it follows that all such details, if true, now rest upon no stronger foundation than a tradition of four hundred years. There is the alternative that *all* of these details are a romantic fiction, as *some* of them plainly are.

The accounts of the discovery of *Greenland*, given in the sagas, are supplemented by incidental notices to be found in contemporary writers; and some of them are confirmed by existing archæological proofs. This certainly tends to substantiate the truth of their statements about other discoveries. The only confirmation of the discovery of *Vinland* to be found in any writer nearly contemporary, is a statement by Adam of Bremen, whose "History of the Propagation of Christianity in the North" was composed in the year 1073. He is known to have journeyed into Denmark; and he states that he was told by King Sveyn Esthrithson that a place had been discovered and frequently visited by his people, which was called Winland, because grapes grew there spontaneously, which produced the best of wine. The manuscripts differ as to whether Winland was a "regio," or an "insula;" the best one reading *insula*.²

As regards the truth of the proposition that "Leif Ericson discovered America in the year 1000 A. D.," your Committee have reached the following conclusion: They think that there

¹ Antiquitates Americanæ, p. 191.

² *Ibid.*, p. 338. For incidental allusions to Vinland in later sagas, see Rask's letter to Wheaton, Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc., vol. xviii. p. 20.

is the same sort of reason for believing in the existence of Leif Ericson that there is for believing in the existence of Agamemnon, — they are both traditions accepted by later writers ; but that there is no more reason for regarding as true the details related about his discoveries than there is for accepting as historic truth the narratives contained in the Homeric poems. Your Committee believe not only that it is antecedently probable that the Norsemen discovered America in the early part of the eleventh century, but that this discovery is confirmed by the same sort of historical tradition, not strong enough to be called evidence, upon which our belief in many of the accepted facts of history rests ; and that the date 1000 A. D., assumed for such discovery, is sufficiently near for all practical purposes, — much nearer the truth than is the traditional date given for the foundation of Rome.

HENRY W. HAYNES.

ABNER C. GOODELL, JR.

Mr. WINSOR spoke as follows : —

The Committee which were appointed to report “ what suitable acknowledgment should be made to Mr. Parkman ” for his recent gifts of manuscripts, beg leave to say that they have examined the volumes, and find them to consist of the following papers : —

A series of documents illustrative of Pontiac and his career, being the manuscript material upon which Mr. Parkman founded his “ Conspiracy of Pontiac.” One volume contains documents from the State Paper Office in London, 1762–1763, consisting of letters of Sir William Johnson, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, and other papers. A second consists of copies from the Archives of the Marine and Colonies at Paris. Two volumes are made up of the Bouquet papers from the British Museum, consisting in part of that officer’s correspondence with Amherst, and covering, respectively, 1759–1763 and 1764–1765. Another volume is made up of journals and personal narratives gathered from the McDougall papers, the manuscripts of the Maryland Historical Society, the Pennsylvania Archives at Harrisburg, the papers of General Cass, and other sources, and including the journals of Major Maxwell Thomson, Lieutenant James Gorrell, George Croghan, Frederick Post, and

other narratives by Jacques Parent, Mrs. Meloche, Mr. Gouin, Gabriel Saint-Aubin, and M. Peltier. In addition, there are four miscellaneous volumes, covering, respectively, 1750-1762, 1763, 1764, 1765-1778, which are drawn from public and private sources, in this country and in England, including such collections as the McDougall papers, the Sir William Johnson papers, etc. These make nine volumes in all, devoted to the subject of Mr. Parkman's earliest historical studies; and they constitute the evidence of his careful study of the material for that labor, which lay outside of the printed books on the subject.

We can find other marks of his careful attention in the series of papers of which he has drawn copies from the collection of that distinguished Canadian historical scholar the Abbé Ferland, and from which other volumes of Mr. Parkman's histories have derived benefit, — in a volume which he has caused to be lettered "Canada, Church and State, 1647-1704." Another volume, "Documents sur le Canada," consists of papers drawn from the Archives Nationales, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and other French sources, and which are scattered between 1627 and 1702.

A volume marked "Voyage au Canada, 1751-1761, by T. C. B.," is a copy of a manuscript acquired within a few years by the Bibliothèque Nationale, and of which Mr. Parkman was not able to avail himself in his "Montcalm and Wolfe," — not, however, much to his disadvantage, for it does not prove of great value; since, though the writer participated in the war, his account was written many years later, from such notes as he had made at the time.

Mr. Parkman made good use of the despatches of Pedro Menendez, 1565-1566, in one section of his "Pioneers of France in the New World," using copies which Buckingham Smith had procured for him from the Archives of Seville; and these seven letters, together with an English translation, fill the volume labelled "Letters of Pedro Menendez."

The Committee take occasion to make mention of other volumes, which Mr. Parkman has added to this collection since he made his first formal presentation, and which have not yet been enumerated on our records: —

Dupuis, intendant of Canada, his "Mémoire, Troubles du Canada, 1728."

Papers from Paris called "Archives du ministères des affaires étrangères, 1629-1686," and a second volume, "1714-1755."

Documents relating to the expedition of Jean François de la Rocque, Seigneur de Roberval, and the "Voyage de Roberval au Canada," which constitute a volume lettered "Archives Nationales, 1598-1759," and a second volume, "1698-1735."

Four volumes of papers from the English Public Record Office, of particular interest for students of our New England history, of dates as follows:—

I. 1693-1711, covering the expedition of Sir William Phips and other succeeding events.

II. 1711-1725. Correspondence of Governors Dudley, Shute, Sir Hovenden Walker, etc.

III. 1744-1746. Siege of Louisburg, etc.

IV. 1746-1749. Letters of Governor Shirley, etc.

The Committee beg to propose the following resolution of thanks to Mr. Parkman:—

Resolved, That the grateful thanks of the Society be given to its Vice-President, Mr. Francis Parkman, for the renewed expression of his interest in the Society, by the increase that he has made to the Parkman Collection of Manuscripts, which still further makes clear the sources and conspicuous merit of his historical monographs.

Respectfully submitted,

JUSTIN WINSOR.

HENRY W. HAYNES.

EDWARD CHANNING.

December, 1887.

Dr. CLARKE addressed the Society in these words:—

I have laid on the table a large Atlas, which I wish to present to this Society. It contains thirty maps of the wars of the French Republic, down to the year VII. (1806). These maps were prepared by the Chief Engineer of the French Army, and include the regions of Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, where campaigns had been carried on. They are very full and minute, and are printed in relief, to show the moun-

tains, valleys, and river-courses of the scenes of war. As a rarity and a curiosity, they should belong to this, or some other Public Library.

I will add a few words, to show how they fell into my hands. They came to me from my father, to whom they were given by his aunt, Mrs. Colonel James Swan, after her return from France. Mrs. Swan was Hepzibah Clarke, and was sister of my grandfather, Samuel Clarke, of Boston. These two were the only children of Barnabas Clarke, who was a ship-master, and afterward a merchant in Boston, living in Bromfield Street, then called Rawson's Lane. A rich bachelor, — Mr. William Dennie, — a friend of the family, had announced his intention of leaving his property to the two children of Barnabas, — Samuel and Hepzibah Clarke. But Samuel displeased him by an early marriage with Miss Martha Curtis, whose father, Obadiah Curtis, lived at the corner of Rawson's Lane and Marlborough Street. So Mr. Dennie left all his property to Hepsy Clarke, who afterward married Colonel James Swan, who had fought in the Revolution, and was by the side of Warren at Bunker Hill. They went to France just before the breaking out of the French Revolution, and remained there during the Reign of Terror. Colonel Swan lost a great deal of his wife's property in some unfortunate speculations; but after their return to America he went back to France and made another fortune, which he remitted to America. In 1815, being about to come home, he was arrested on a charge of debt and sent to Saint-Pelagie, in which prison he remained fifteen years, until the general discharge of such prisoners at the accession of Louis Philippe. He refused to allow his wife to pay the claim, declaring it unjust. She therefore remitted to him yearly a sum ample enough to enable him to live in a handsomely furnished apartment and give dinner-parties in prison to his friends. When set free, the air of liberty seemed to disagree with him, for he died shortly after.

Meantime Mrs. Swan had built the house in Dorchester, which is still standing on the main street from Boston. It is in the style of a French château, with one large circular saloon reaching to the top of the house, and one large dining-room behind it. The rest of the house is in two wings, containing small rooms for the family uses. One room in the

south wing was the library, filled with French books and French philosophical instruments. Madam Swan herself was very French in her tastes and manners, a brilliant talker, telling innumerable anecdotes of what she saw in France in the days of Robespierre. Once a year our family were invited to pass the day at her house; and I recollect well how I sat on a little stool at her feet, listening with wonder and delight to her eloquent narrations. The saloon and dining-room were furnished with elegant furniture brought from France, consisting of large arm-chairs, heavily gilt andirons, beautiful blue and gold vases; while on the walls were hung rare and valuable French pictures. At dinner Madam Swan would herself open her bottle of rose champagne, and by a dexterous twist of the thumb cause the cork to fly to the ceiling. My visits to her house remain in my memory as one of the most lively impressions of my childhood.

Mrs. Swan built three houses on Chestnut Street for her three daughters, — Mrs. Howard, Mrs. Sullivan, and Mrs. Sargent. One is still occupied by a great-granddaughter; the others have passed into the hands of strangers.

Old age is garrulous in its reminiscences of its youthful years. But you must forgive us this; for what is the use of growing old unless we can thus connect past generations with the present, and help to preserve the continuity of our social life?

Dr. HOLMES added, that with his classmate and friend he had visited that house; and he related one or two incidents connected with it.

Judge CHAMBERLAIN remarked that the "New Princeton Review" for November contained an article by J. Durand, on "American History in the French Archives," in which he found some interesting extracts from the correspondence between Gérard de Rayneval, the first French minister to the United States, in 1778-1779, and Count de Vergennes. Several of these relate to the efforts of the New England delegates, led by Samuel Adams, with the aid of Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, to bring on negotiations with Great Britain for peace, without making France a party agreeably to the Treaty of Alliance in 1778. It was feared in Massachusetts, and especially in Boston, that New England interests in the Fisheries

would be sacrificed to French interests; and the other States thought that New England's interests were being pushed without reciprocity. May 14, 1779, De Rayneval says:—

“Whatever opinions on the subject the present members of Congress may entertain, nine, and perhaps ten, States will refuse to continue the war for this accessory advantage to New England, which offers no reciprocity of interests.”

And again, June 12, he says that the danger arising from the pressing of the Fishery question by Adams and Lee was lessened by their absence from Congress:—

“Lee has been accused, in open session of the Virginia Assembly, of having sacrificed the best interests of America and of the Alliance, while the storm raised against Samuel Adams in Boston has just compelled him to return there. . . . These two champions find it necessary to change their language on account of public clamor. They are now doing what they can to make it appear that they were eager for peace, and to throw the blame of delays on their antagonists. . . . All the States approve the decision in favor of France.”

Samuel Adams's estimate of the value of the Fisheries, and his determination to retain them for New England, are well-known facts, clearly set forth in Wells's Life of him;¹ and though he had made some powerful enemies in Boston, it was not on account of his opinions on those matters. Doubtless there were those, especially in the country towns, who did not entertain his extreme views, and were unwilling to insist upon the Fisheries as conditions of peace. To bring these towns into line was his purpose; and to that end he used his favorite agency, — the town meeting.

At a town meeting in Boston, Dec. 11, 1781, not many weeks after the capitulation of Cornwallis, instructions were voted to the Boston representatives to the General Court elect, of which the concluding paragraph is as follows:—

“From these considerations, Gentlemen, we instruct and direct you, in the approaching sessions of the legislature of this Commonwealth to move for, and to use your influence to procure an application to Congress, that they would give positive instructions to their Commissioners for negotiating a peace, to make the right of the United States to the FISHERY an indispensable Article of Treaty.”

¹ Vol. iii. p. 151.

With a printed letter, dated December 14, William Cooper, the Town Clerk of Boston, sent these instructions to all the towns of the Commonwealth, and requested that they would take them into consideration. He also expressed a hope of their concurrence.

These documents are printed in full. Samuel Adams's name nowhere appears in them; but the original draft of the circular, in his hand, now in my possession, and the internal evidence found in both papers, leave no doubt as to their authorship.

Gentlemen, — The Inhabitants of the Town of BOSTON, legally assembled, have taken into consideration a matter which they conceive all other maritime Towns in this and the neighboring States are equally, and some of them more nearly interested than they. It is the subject of the Fishery, and the great importance of a common right therein being secured to the United States, whenever a Treaty of Peace shall be concluded. To flatter ourselves with so happy a prospect, so far as to neglect the necessary preparations for another vigorous campaign, would indeed be unbecoming the wisdom of Americans; and yet, so important has been the success of the allied Arms, the last year, that it would seem to be madness in the extreme for Britain any longer to persist in her unrighteous claims. But wisdom has forsaken her councils.

We ought to presume, that the supreme Representative of these States will have an equal regard in so momentous a crisis to the rights of each individual. We would not suggest the contrary. But, may it not be supposed, that persons whose situation is remote from the Fishery, and who derive advantages from it in its more distant effects and not directly perceivable, are probably not so attentive to its unspeakable importance, as others who are immediately concerned, and depend upon it as the only source of Commerce and even their Subsistence? If this should be the fact, would not States so immediately interested in the Fishery as ours, be justly criminated by the others, if we should neglect seasonably to lay before them our own sense of the necessity of an express article in a Treaty of Peace for its security? Should we not be wanting to ourselves in a most essential point, and be chargeable by all posterity, with sacrificing our and their invaluable Rights, by unpardonable carelessness? Such is the sentiment of this Town. And though we would be far from obtruding this or any sentiment of ours upon others, we cannot but think ourselves justifiable in caudally recommending it to their serious deliberation.

This Town have judged it necessary to instruct their Representatives in the General Court on the subject. The instructions are inclos'd.

Many other and cogent reasons might have been urged, and will undoubtedly be made use of by you, if you should think it proper to take the matter into your consideration. Should we be so fortunate as to have your full concurrence in opinion with us, we assure ourselves that we shall be equally fortunate in the aid we shall receive from your concurrent exertions.

In the Name and by Order of the Town of BOSTON, in Meeting legally assembled, December 14, 1781.

WILLIAM COOPER *Town-Clerk.*

AT a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of *Boston*, duly qualified and legally warned, in public Town Meeting assembled at *Faneuil Hall*, *December 11, 1781.*

VOTED, That the following INSTRUCTIONS be given to the Gentlemen who represent the Town in the General Court, *viz.*

GENTLEMEN, — The brilliant Successes, which have attended the Allied Arms through the course of the preceding campaign, afford us the most flattering prospect that our enemies (though hitherto obstinate to a degree of infatuation) will soon sue for peace. — In the conditions of that peace, your constituents feel themselves as deeply and immediately interested as any part of the powers at war; but from an equal desire to promote the general welfare of the Federal Republic, and the safety and happiness of this Commonwealth, they think it their duty to open to you their sentiments, on the importance of that principal branch of the Eastern Trade, the *Fishery*, and the necessity of confirming a right to it, by an express article of the Treaty of Peace.

The present decayed state of a number of our maritime towns, contrasted with their flourishing situations previous to the present contest, is a striking proof, not only of the Advantages of the Fishery to the commercial part of the Commonwealth, but the immediate ruin that follows the want of it; and if any of their sister towns can boast more eligible circumstances, their riches are derived from a source which is but temporary, and will last only [for] the war. The stagnation of the Fishery furnished us with the means of cruising against the enemy's property, and 'tis to the astonishing successes that have hitherto attended to that kind of enterprise, that we owe the principal part of our present trade. — And though the merchants of some of our sea-ports have lately made considerable importations from the different European markets, yet 'tis from a source not more lasting than the other, that they derive their ability to do it. The introduction of foreign armies and navies amongst us, has created great demands for our internal supplies; those supplies have furnished our merchants with exchange, and enabled them to make large remittances.

In addition to which the exportation of gold and silver, during the paper currency, has constituted no inconsiderable part of the balance of our trade. But it is obvious to the eye of every one, that these resources of our wealth must inevitably fail with the war:—And in a time of peace, like all other Nations, we must depend only upon the staple commodities of our own country, for the support of our commerce. —These commodities, exclusive of the Fishery, will consist only of Lumber, and a small quantity of Inland Provisions. These articles were never supposed more than sufficient to balance our West-India importations; for every European article of consumption therefore (which was formerly paid for by our fish and oyl) the trade must be in debt. How fast that debt will accumulate, and how long it will take to ruin the trade, and impoverish the country, may be seen by the calculations of the merchants of this Town in the year 1769, by which it appears that upwards of 400 vessels were constantly employed in the Fishery, and the annual profits of their labour amounted to upwards of £160,000 sterling; the whole of this was remitted to Great Britain for payment of the merchandizes annually imported from that island:—It therefore follows, that without this staple we must either content ourselves to forego the use of all European commodities or become mere carriers to the rest of the world; the former from habit is become impracticable; and the latter is too mortifying to submit to, and too inconsiderable in its prospects to be considered as an equivalent.

It is hence also easy to conceive (though we apprehend needless to urge) of how vast an importance the preservation of this trade is to any other part of the Commonwealth. —The various mechanics, necessarily employed in the building, rigging and fitting out such a number of vessels, must without it be destitute of subsistence: And the great quantities of provisions, expended by our fishermen, and the timber made use of in building the vessels, together with the staves, hoops, &c., made use of in the exportation of the fish and oil, will convince us, that the loss of the Fishery must essentially affect our inland brethren:—And, without urging the more remote argument, that the wealth and strength of every nation depends on the prosperity of its commerce, it is evident, that the vast debt we have found it necessary to contract in the present war, together with all the public taxes we may hereafter be obliged to raise, on the failure of the Trade, or in proportion to its diminution, must inevitably fall on the Landed Interest:—And when they consider, what a great part of the public taxes is paid in the mercantile Towns, and that the Country are in a great measure enabled to pay their proportion of them by vending their produce in the Sea-ports, it is clear, that upon the depopulation of the maritime, and the additional weight of taxes on the country towns, which must follow the loss of our trade, the burden will be to them intolerable.

But the reasons need not be local. For though the inhabitants of the other States are not so immediately affected by the Loss of the Fishery, yet we conceive it not less important to the whole confederacy, than to us, in its political consequences. — Their future rank among the Nations of the Earth will depend on their *Naval Strength*; and if they mean to be a commercial people, it behoves them to be able at all times to *protect* their commerce: The means by which they can procure that protection and naval strength, is to give encouragement to that kind of trade among themselves, which will best serve as a nursery for seamen. — The importance of the Fishery in this view is obvious from the valuable acquisitions made in the beginning of the war by our privateers, seven eighths of which were manned from this source: — And though from this circumstance our enemies, open and secret, have endeavored to alarm the other States of the Union with an idea, that the possession of the Fishery will give a dangerous superiority of strength to the Eastern States, and so have attempted to disunite us in the claim of it; yet we are confident, their wicked designs must prove abortive, when 'tis considered, that (if we were disposed to be a faithless and a treacherous people) our necessities for the use of the Southern commodities, and the advantages we shall derive by a circuitous trade from their ports to foreign markets, will forever make it the *Interest* of the Eastern States to preserve the Confederation perpetual; and will always be security to the Southern States against the abuse of any superiority of strength, which the Fishery may be supposed to give us.

Should it be said, that the Right we claim, is a Right common to all nations, and that we shall therefore be entitled to the use of it, whether it is made an express article of Treaty or not: We answer, that it can injure no Power to confirm our *natural* rights by express acknowledgment, if they honestly intend we shall enjoy them; and if they decline making this acknowledgment, it is a just cause of suspicion, that their intentions are not honest. — But we know the haughty Kingdom with whom we are at war; and her annals furnish us with instances of her Sovereign's claiming by solemn acts, the empire of the seas, and setting bounds to other independent nations in the use of that element, to which by the laws of nature they had an equal title. And *France* herself (now the greatest naval Power upon earth) has found it necessary to be admitted *by Treaty* to the participation of that very right, for which we now contend. And why should we imagine, that Great-Britain will be more tender of the natural rights of the United States, than she has been of those of other nations, who were infinitely better able to resist her unlawful claims upon the ocean. On the contrary, have we not every reason to expect, that her resentment, heightened by disappointment will induce her to revenge herself on the States, as soon as a con-

venient opportunity presents itself; and unless this right is guaranteed to us by the negotiating powers, she will undoubtedly make this the cause of her quarrel: and the instant she attacks on this pretence, the whole Confederacy must be involved in a war;—for the Fishery having been uninterruptedly enjoyed by our Ancestors from time immemorial, and secured to them by charter, is an ancient privilege and one of those liberties, for the security of which, that firm league of friendship was entered into by the Thirteen States, so clearly stipulated in the third article of their confederation. — It is therefore the duty, seconded by the clearest interest of every State within the Federal Union, to have this right explicitly acknowledged in the treaty of peace, as the only means of securing to themselves a lasting and a happy one.

From these considerations, Gentlemen, we instruct and direct you, in the approaching sessions of the legislature of this Commonwealth, to move for, and to use your influence to procure an application to Congress, that they would give positive instructions to their Commissioners for negotiating a peace to, make the right of the United States to the FISHERY *an indispensable article of treaty*.

On motion of the Treasurer, Mr. C. C. SMITH, it was voted that the income of the Massachusetts Historical Trust Fund for the year ending Sept. 30, 1887, be placed at the credit of the Committee for publishing the "Trumbull Papers."

Mr. Edwin P. Seaver, Superintendent of Schools in Boston, was elected a Resident Member of the Society; and the Hon. Carl Schurz, of New York, was chosen an Honorary Member.

An excellent crayon likeness of Mr. George Dexter, the late lamented Recording Secretary of the Society, which had been drawn by Otto Grundmann, head teacher in the Art School at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, was placed on exhibition at this meeting.